

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OMB-01 SCCT-01 CU-02 AID-05 SY-05 IO-10

A-01 OPR-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /084 W

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R 251210Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8953

INFO AMCONSUL ADANA

AMCONSUL ISTANBUL

AMCONSUL IZMIR

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE ANKARA 3283

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, TU

SUBJ: TURKISH UNIVERSITY RECTORS COMMENT ON STUDENT
DISORDERS

REF: ANKARA 3075

1. AS A NEW OUTBREAK OF STUDENT VIOLENCE OCCURRED IN ISTANBUL
APRIL 24 (ISTANBUL'S SEPTTEL), THE RECTORS OF 13 TURKISH UNIVERSITIES,
WHO MET IN IZMIR LAST WEEK, SUBMITTED A REPORT TO PRIMIN SULEYMAN
DEMIREL REGARDING THE RECENT STUDENT DISTURBANCES. THE
RECTORS' REPORT, ACCORDING TO THE TURKISH NEWS AGENCY (THA)
NOTED THAT POLITICALLY-MOTIVATED STUDENT INCIDENTS HAVE BEEN
OCCURRING THROUGHOUT THE WORLD "SINCE 1968" AND "HAVE ESTABLISHED
THE TRADITION OF USING STUDENT ISSUES IN ORDER TO DRAG ALONG THE
MASS OF STUDENTS AND HAVE BEEN ABLE TO CONCEAL THEIR REAL
OBJECTIVES BEHIND SUCH A COVER." CLAIMING THAT THE SECURITY
OF EDUCATION IN TURKISH UNIVERSITIES WAS THREATENED BY SUCH
INCIDENTS, THE RECTORS CALLED UPON THE STATE SECURITY FORCES
TO TAKE APPROPRIATE MEASURES TO RESTORE ORDER IN THE
UNIVERSITIES, "... WHICH ARE CLEARLY THE FIELDS OF THESE
EVENTS AND NOT THEIR SOURCE."

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2. ADDITIONALLY, PROF TARIK SOMER, RECTOR OF THE MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY (METU), WHICH WAS CLOSED FOLLOWING RECENT DISTURBANCES (REFTEL), TOLD JOURNALISTS APRIL 24 THAT THE UNIVERSITY WOULD DEFINITELY BE REOPENED APRIL 28. DURING THE INCIDENTS WHICH LEAD TO THE CLOSING OF METU, SOMER CONTINUED, STUDENTS HAD COMPLAINED THAT DORMITORY FEES (TL 80 - \$5.71- PER MONTH) WERE TOO HIGH AND HAD BASED DEMONSTRATIONS ON THIS COMPLAINT. REFERRING TO THE RECTORS' REPROT, SOMER SAID THAT STUDENT DISTURBANCES WERE POLITICALLY MOTIVATED AND THAT EDUCATIONAL ISSUES WERE BEING USED AS A PRETEXT.

3. COMMENT: THE RECTORS' REPORT CLEARLY PLACES THE DEMIREL GOVERNMENT ON NOTICE THAT STUDENT INCIDENTS HAVE GONE BEYOND THE CAPABILITIES OF THE UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATIONS TO HANDLE. THE RECTORS HAVE, IN ESSENCE, ABSOLVED THEIR UNIVERSITIES OF BLAME FOR PRODUCING THE DISCONTENT THAT FEEDS DISORDER, AND HAVE PRESENTED THE PROBLEM AS A POLITICAL ONE WHICH THE GOVERNMENT MUST SOLVE. THE RECTORS' POSITION MAY BE DIFFICULT TO MAINTAIN, SINCE THE STUDENT INCIDENTS THAT BEGAN LAST NOVEMBER RARELY HAVE HAD ANY OVERT CONNECTION WITH NATIONAL POLITICAL ISSUES (ALTHOUGH SOME OF THE PARTICIPANTS HAVE CLEARLY HAD PARTY AFFILIATIONS) AND THE STUDENTS HAVE PRESENTED A NUMBER OF WHAT WOULD SEEM LEGITIMATE ACADEMIC GRIEVANCES. NEVERTHELESS, THE RECTORS' REPORT COULD WELL HELP TO FOCUS PUBLIC ATTENTION ON DEMIREL'S HANDLING OF STUDENT DISTURBANCES -- AN AREA IN WHICH HIS LACK OF FIRMNESS DURING HIS PREVIOUS PREMIERSHIP HELPED LEAD TO HIS UNSEATING BY THE ARMED FORCES IN 1971.
MACOMBER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PHYSICAL SECURITY, STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS, UNIVERSITIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 25 APR 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: woolflhd
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975ANKARA03283
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750146-0241
From: ANKARA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750414/aaaaamrh.tel
Line Count: 90
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 ANKARA 3075
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: woolflhd
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 AUG 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <20 AUG 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <10 DEC 2003 by woolflhd>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TURKISH UNIVERSITY RECTORS COMMENT ON STUDENT DISORDERS
TAGS: PINT, TU
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006